

When a lesson is given, or any task whatever set, complete attention should be insisted upon; no listlessness or trifling should be tolerated; but of course care must be taken that the strain does not last long, as children are neither physically nor mentally capable of prolonged concentration. The habit, however, of fixing the mind promptly and entirely upon one thing at a time outweighs almost all others in the worth of its moral and intellectual consequences. Weakness of character, vacillation, aimlessness, and inertness cannot go along with it.

The principle underlying these practical suggestions, which are, after all, but few and scattered, is plain and simple enough: it is this—that from the first a child's own efforts, physical, mental, and moral, should be as intimately as possible associated with all that he gains of good and avoids of evil; he is in all respects to be treated as an active, independent, and more or less rational agent, so that he may early learn to feel his own controlled will a power in his small world.

But perhaps the most important condition of all success in this educational aim remains to be mentioned, and I have kept it purposely to the last. No endeavour to strengthen a child's will and to create self-reliance, energy, and endurance, will succeed if his life be dull and dreary, if half his time he is, what we elders call in our own case, "being bored." He must have things which it is worth his while to gain if he is to make struggles; he must have interests if he is to be eager; he must have plenty of scope for his faculties and activities if he is to exert them; and this scope should be always a little ahead of them. If one half of children's naughtiness and ill-temper comes of dulness, narrowness, and monotony, so does a great part of their weakness and stolidity. Having few things presented to them worth caring for or struggling for, they grow up apathetic and indolent.

THE FESOLE CLUB PAPERS.

BY W. G. COLLINGWOOD.

I.—WO DIE CITRONEN BLÜH'N.

It was late in the autumn that I was there, some years ago. We had driven up from Florence in the heat of the day; sketched Fra Angelico's monastery—the "Tuscan artist's" observatory, that Milton speaks of, on "the top of Fesole"; with sunlight slanting across its pines and purple summits of Apennine looking in among their stems; and we went down before dusk to see the ancient walls of the town. Just outside the gate, my guide, philosopher, and friend (for such he has always been to me, and the best that ever was) showed me a strange thing: how the Cyclopean masonry of the foundations seemed to pass by hardly noticeable degrees into a natural escarpment of living rock, so bedded and jointed that it looked like handiwork of men. It seemed that the prehistoric builders had fixed upon that natural feature as the opportunity for their citadel, and only sought to complete and continue the natural wall by fitting together such blocks of native limestone as lay at hand, exactly after the pattern of Nature, bed to bed, and joint to joint.

That was the beginning of Etruscan architecture, exemplifying for all time the first law of good building—how stones may be well and truly laid. It grew into the wonderful art which Etruria taught to all Italy; by which Rome itself—not in a day—was built; and after many days Florence, too, down in Val d'Arno, with her Baptistery and Duomo and Giotto's Tower, the consummation of architecture. Meanwhile Fæsulæ—Fesole—Fiesole, founded by the mountain giants, Cyclopes and star-gazing Atlas, grew to be the central and sacred home of Etruscan thought and art, giving out their laws to all the western world, as Athens to Greece. Upon this old citadel was reared the house where the painter-saint of mediæval Christianity in a trance saw heaven opened and angels ascending and descending.

There, later still, to the beginner of modern science heaven once more was opened, if it were only through a telescope : no angels there now ; but in their place the mystery of eternal law and the power that guides the stars in their courses. And these—the mythic laws of Fors and Fas, the mystic laws of Heaven and Hell, and the scientific laws of the sacred book of Nature ; the triune codes of Conduct, and Faith, and Knowledge—indivisible when rightly viewed, and indissoluble, are the presences that haunt this city of the mountain—are the Laws of Féssole.

Founded upon the living rock, built up out of it line upon line, after the primal ordinance of Nature, but repairing its broken places, strengthening its weaker sides, raising its height still higher—that is a parable to us of another sort of Building, with which we are all concerned—the edification of living temples, the education of the human spirit. In *this* architecture, too, we must work according to those first laws of Féssole, not vainly hoping to conjure up an Aladdin-palace out of vacancy, nor hastily piling a Babel of far-fetched graces and futile accomplishments, but developing the resources and confirming the powers that the Creator has given ; so that, one with another, the lives we have to form may stand together, wisely planned and nobly grouped into a new city, gloriously to be spoken of, whose foundation is in the Holy Mountains.

And for this end there are many means, which we do not well to neglect. “As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there.” You see that this inspired conception of a city of God included the finer arts as necessary to its perfection ; poetry and music are named as its glories ; there was no need to mention the sculptor’s work of chapter and cherubim, the embroidery of the Vail in blue and purple and crimson. Mere walls, you had thought, and a roof would have been enough ; but it was not so.

I say no more now of the claim of Art as a great God-given factor in life—as, when rightly used, the crown and consummation of it. There are not many who seriously deny its influence, if they do not give it the place it deserves—chiefly because it has not always been true to its own nobility. It has allowed itself to be misunderstood and misdirected, to serve the pride and the passions of men, just like any other good gift and great institution. And even as a means of education it has not always used its

privileges and fulfilled its mission. It has been too often employed in the service of vanity, to teach a mere “accomplishment,” an idle trick, by which the amusement of an odd half-hour shall be passed off as a colourable imitation of the work of genius and labour. There is no education in that, any more than in teaching dogs to dance and parrots to talk. And yet Art, when rightly directed, is educational, for it trains not only one faculty, but all the faculties together ; it trains the hand and the eye, and it trains the head and the heart ; it teaches us to see, and to see truly ; it teaches us to think—that, science can do ; but it teaches us also to admire and to love.

This kind of educational purpose—observation of what is true, and appreciation of what is admirable in Nature and in the great works of bygone times—we can now attribute to Art more surely than in former years, when, even by its best friends, it was thought to be only an ornament of life, and a pastime. For this we have to thank many earnest workers and thinkers but, above all, the great writer to whom allusion has been made, Mr. Ruskin, who, more than anyone, has taught us to know the value of Art, its strong influence and capacity for good. In order to bring out its educational powers to the full, to put the amateur student in a way to observe with accuracy and to record legibly the appearances of Nature, and in so doing to exemplify the simple and direct aims of the great early artists of Italy, and to enter into the spirit of their work, he began, in his later years, to re-write his teaching, and to re-arrange it in accordance with those methods which a long experience and study had shown him to be the best and truest. And because the laws he attempted to lay down were the natural and simple canons of practice, like that earliest Etruscan building, developing the powers which we all have in our possession, in solid and straightforward progress ; and because his method was learnt from those Italian masters whose art centred in Fiesole, he called his book “The Laws of Féssole.”

But that book was never finished. Ill-health and other claims on the author’s attention made it impossible for him to carry out his plan completely. And yet the spirit of it is sufficiently indicated for our guidance, if we choose it as a guide, in the learning of this art as a means—not of accomplishment—but of education.

We have been talking about the land where, as Mignon’s
VOL. II.—NO. 1. D

song says, the lemons grow. All our best lessons on painting come from Italy, and artists, you know, are fond of Italian models. Shall we ask one to sit for us for our first attempt? Some teachers would bid you begin with the "Marmorbilden," and keep you a year at the antique; but we may as well study Nature from the first; and if we can't get a Mignon to paint, we can get one of her lemons for a penny. I dare say there is one in the store-room. . . .

I can find only one, and that is a poor specimen; it is not elegant and elliptical, like most lemons; it is too dumpy and lumpy to be perfect, and the wrinkle at the end farthest from the stalk is grossly exaggerated, so that the tip of it is tilted back like a snub nose, or the cap of liberty. It will hardly do for an example. And yet the founders of Fiesole used the material that came to hand; and, indeed, as this lemon lies on the table, I feel that I maligned it at first. It is not a mere lump; see how it pulls itself together to the place where the stalk has been, and swells away from the little round brown spot in varying surfaces that sometimes seem as though they were going to be flat, and then glide into roundness again, like a crystal whose facets have been almost worn away by ages of washing in a river-bed. And then its splendid lustre, and glow of colour! Decidedly, it is worth painting.

But I can't paint it lying down there on the table. I want it on the level of the eye, and farther away. Some other day we can discuss the reasons why; meanwhile, let us put it on the cabinet at the end of the room, about, or nearly, twelve feet away. You think it is too far off to be seen properly; but look! as it stands there it seems somehow rounder than it did before; the bright shine comes out brighter, and the dark side seems fuller and broader; all the texture, the little details you expected to be so troublesome, have disappeared; and we see nothing but a yellow round, beautifully gradated, so that you know it for a solid mass. I put a dark-green book behind it against the wall, to relieve it more distinctly. How it glows there like a golden lamp in the green gloom! Decidedly it is worth painting.

I want to dash away with lemon-yellow and dark-green at once, but we must have an outline to guide the colour. Here is a piece of drawing-paper the size of a page of the *Parents' Review*, which will be large enough; if it were stretched, so

much the better; but to-day we will pin it on a board anyhow, and if it cockles up when it is wet we will let it dry quietly—not by the fire.

How big is the outline to be? Better make it just the size of the real thing. We want to train our eyes to accuracy, and we don't train them unless we accustom them to accuracy from the first. Some teachers, I know, forbid measuring, and in an examination that is right; but in study, the more carefully you measure at first with compasses, the sooner you will get the power of measuring with the eye. Take the length and breadth of the lemon, and mark them on the paper with dots; and now draw the outline, if you please.

You can't at a single stroke! No more can I, to confess the truth. It seemed that almost any round would do, for this is not an elegant lemon. But here it is a little flattened—not too much; it must be rounder. No, that is too round; more tapered towards the point of its snub nose. No, not so much! Well, with pencil and indiarubber we have done our best, and ask somebody to criticise. Somebody says, "I think you have made it too *cornery* here and too fat there, but I am not an artist, and I really don't know." Excuse me, but you are right, and it shall be altered. Is it correct now? Then we had better fix that line with pen and ink, so that it may never get lost when we rub the pencil away. No matter if it shows when the painting is done; it is far too curious and interesting to lose; it has cost us something, and we love it for that—too well to lose it. And now to draw the other shapes in our picture in the same way; the edge of the cabinet, and so on.

At last we may paint! Without shading? Certainly. If we were not going to colour, shading would be necessary, but when we have coloured properly we shall find that the shading will be there. It will be wise to begin with the background and save up the bright yellow for a treat at the last. For this sort of study we can use any colours, twopenny tubes will do; and there are no secrets in the mixing of them—no tricks; nothing but straightforward common-sense.

To get the colours right at once, we can mix them first, and touch the tint on the edge of a separate slip of the same sort of paper, and hold it up, in a good light (so as neither to get a shade nor a shine on it) against the object, as though we were matching a ribbon. The dark-green book seems to be imitable

with Vandyck brown and Prussian blue. Dry the slip quickly by the fire, and you see it fades a little when dry ; so we must put more strength and warmth into our tint, to allow for the colour's drying colder ; and remember this as a convenient rule.

Now lay the same tint over the background, not very wet. Where deeper shadows come, throw in some more colour, dryer ; and where little lights come, take them out with a nearly dry brush while the tint is still wet. Do a small piece at a time, stopping at any convenient line, or else the colour will dry before you can get your lights taken out and your darks thrown in ; and don't put in the darks with very wet colour, or it will run about into slops.

It looks far too dark, does it not ? But that is because of its contrast with the white paper. You know how dark even a clean handkerchief looks in the snow. As we have matched the colour, it is bound to be right ; and it looks sloppy and granular, but it will dry into flatness and transparency ; or, if not to-day, it will come right another day, after you have had a little more practice.

Now, the colour of the cabinet, which is puzzling ; burnt sienna won't do without some blue in it ; and this wants some brown, and that wants some yellow ; we shall get it at last. And finally the lemon itself, for which raw lemon-yellow is not enough ; it needs a little cadmium and gamboge to warm it, and the dark side is a very deep yellow—raw sienna chiefly. If it were a very dull day we should need a little blue ; for the less light there is in the sky the more grey is in the shades indoors. But the dark side of that lemon will never be black or brown by daylight.

It seems tedious to match these colours, but the work goes more quickly for it in the end ; there is no uncertainty, and muddling, and rubbing out, and getting into despair, and wasting time, thanks to the laws of Fésole. We have tinted the lemon, taken out its light, thrown in its dark, and the drawing is done ; a rather long hour's lesson, but not much more. We will place the picture beside the object, and look at them from a distance.

Extremely like ! but not exactly like ; fainter and mistier, for the tones you matched were the real tones as seen through a dozen feet of atmosphere and suffusing light. Not only the



tones, but the colours seem fainter than Nature's. You want to paint them up ? more yellow, more green and brown ? Very well ; try . . .

You have got your picture darker and deeper in colour, but what has happened ? Somehow the sweetness of the colour is gone, its luminousness and the freshness of the first wet work ; it is beginning to look what artists call "heavy." And though it will not seem so violent at a distance, it is getting just a little "vulgar" ; the refinement and softness of the real tones, harmonised by atmosphere and suffusion, are gone. If you were always to see your picture at the distance of its objects it would be right, but as it stands it is spoiled.

But the lemon will keep, and you can make another drawing ; careful outline, penned down ; matched tints, steadily laid ; no retouching : and if that fails, another till you are satisfied. And then write your name and address behind, pack it with a rigid board to prevent crushing in the post, and address it to me before March 21. Then I will mark it and write you what advice I can about it, and send it back with the other lemon-drawings I receive, and the criticisms, in a portfolio to each in turn ; so that everybody may see everybody else's work, which will be interesting and instructive to all. And so with your kind help we shall establish a monthly painting-class, which, as its laws are the laws of Fésole, we will call, by your leave, "The Fésole Club."